

What's New?

CECR Releases Two New Case Summaries

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) introduces two new case summaries available online at <http://cecr.ed.gov/guides/summaries.cfm>: *TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement* and *Transforming Schools in Mobile County, Alabama*. CECR case summaries tell the stories of alternative compensation programs from conception through implementation. They also provide valuable lessons learned for others who are in the process of designing or implementing such programs.

TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement

TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement is a national education reform initiative started by the Milken Family Foundation in 1999. The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) currently administers TAP. The case summary describes the following:

- The four interrelated key components of TAP: multiple career paths, ongoing applied professional growth, instructionally focused accountability, and performance-based compensation.
- The structured yet flexible nature of TAP, which allows schools and districts to exercise site-based autonomy in customizing the details of the components to best meet their needs.
- Lessons learned from TAP that speak to the need to implement comprehensive reform, broker communication between stakeholders, and increase teacher buy-in.

To access the case summary, visit <http://cecr.learningpt.org/guides/summaries/TAPCaseSummary.pdf>.

Transforming Schools in Mobile County, Alabama

The Transformed School Initiative in Mobile County, Alabama, was a five-year pilot program that included annual recruitment and retention bonuses as well as annual performance-based bonuses for teachers and administrators. The case summary details the following:

- The focus of the initiative on increasing student achievement in the five lowest performing schools in the Mobile County Public School System.
- How student achievement scores and the attainment of performance goals set by teachers and administrators at the classroom and school levels determined the performance-based awards.
- Lessons learned, including the importance of three factors: sustainable financing, community engagement in education reform, and collaboration among stakeholders.

To access the case summary, visit <http://cecr.learningpt.org/guides/summaries/MobileCaseSummary.pdf>.

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Hot Off the Press

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision-Making—*Institute of Education Sciences. September 2009*

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dddm_pg_092909.pdf

The Institute of Education Sciences released a new Practice Guide through the What Works Clearinghouse on using student achievement data for decision making. The guide provides a literature review and recommendations for the effective use of data to monitor students' academic progress and evaluate instructional practices.

Poll: Voters Want Merit Pay for Teachers—

Asbury Park Press. January 20, 2010

<http://www.app.com/>

(Available for a minimal fee)

A Quinnipiac University poll released in January indicates that a majority of New Jersey residents favor tying teacher pay to performance. The state may face pushback from the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), however. NJEA has expressed opposition to the state's application for the Race to the Top grant, which encourages the use of student achievement data in evaluating teacher performance.

Teachers Mixed on Incentive-Based Pay Plan—

The Augusta Chronicle. January 30, 2010

<http://chronicle.augusta.com/news/education/2010-01-30/teachers-mixed-incentive-based-pay-plan?v=1264816295>

In January, the governor of Georgia introduced a performance-based pay program as a part of the state's Race to the Top application. Current teachers could opt into the program, which would base teacher pay on student achievement and classroom observations, or decide to remain on the traditional salary schedule. However, all teachers hired after the implementation of the program would be subject to the new pay schedule. Teachers across the state express varying opinions—some support the idea but are wary of specific program details, whereas others oppose the program entirely.

Decatur School District, Teachers Union Team Up for Race to the Top—*Decatur Herald-Review.*

February 6, 2010

http://www.herald-review.com/news/local/article_cd59f9c7-849b-560b-9fc1-a6184e0fc00d.html

The Decatur School District signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the state of Illinois to support the statewide initiatives outlined in the Race to the Top application, including teacher and principal performance evaluations using student achievement scores. The local teachers union also has submitted an MOU to work with the district in implementing the reforms if the state receives the funds.

Virginia's Effort for Race to the Top Modest So Far—*The Washington Post. February 8, 2010*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/07/AR2010020702833.html>

In its application for Race to the Top funds, Virginia proposes experimentation with performance-based pay for teachers. The state would give incentives to districts to develop rigorous teacher and principal evaluation systems, including use of student achievement data to determine teacher effectiveness. The state also could apply Race to the Top funds to districts that implement a performance pay pilot program. A majority of school districts in Virginia (117 of 132) signed agreements to participate in Race to the Top if the state receives funding.

National Charter School Consortium: Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC)

New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) developed the Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC), an alternative compensation program currently implemented in multiple school systems, including the National Charter School Consortium (NCSC). NCSC includes 179 charter schools from 20 states and the District of Columbia. NLNS partners with Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) and SchoolWorks to document effective teaching practices and provide incentives to teachers and leaders willing to share their effective practices with other educators in the EPIC Knowledge System network. Each year, NLNS invites new charter schools to participate if they meet the following three criteria: (1) serve a student population in which 30 percent of students or more qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, (2) submit a minimum of three years of test scores for all students, and (3) agree to share effective practices with NLNS and EPIC partners.

The EPIC Model includes the following primary components:

- **Identify schools with the largest student achievement gain scores.** NLNS works with MPR to identify the highest achieving charter schools using value-added analysis. All instructional staff and school leaders in identified schools receive a bonus.
- **Identify effective teaching practices and school leadership strategies in the highest gain charter schools.** Effective Practice Teams, led by SchoolWorks, visit the award-winning charter schools to identify effective teacher practices and school leadership strategies, using protocols developed in partnership with NLNS. The teachers and leaders identified through this process receive a financial award for agreeing to share their effective practices with other teachers and leaders.

- **Create comprehensive case studies for the EPIC Knowledge System.** Educators identified as effective are eligible to document and share their strategies (e.g., curricular and instructional strategies, allocation of school resources, and professional development approaches) with other teachers in their school, district, and nationwide through an online community.

What are the goals of the program?

NCSC focuses on charter schools in high-need areas. As research has shown, such schools tend to have more new teachers than their district counterparts and a higher rate of teacher and principal turnover. EPIC strives to support recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers in the charter schools involved in the grant.

Through its practice-sharing focus, EPIC aspires to improve student achievement in the charter school consortium across the country. In order to meet the goals, the EPIC model focuses on the link between student achievement and increased teacher and principal effectiveness.

How much are the incentives?

Through the value-added model, NCSC identifies the schools with the highest gain scores as “Gold-Gain” schools and those with the second highest as “Silver-Gain” schools. The following table illustrates the incentive structure:

Staff	Gold-Gain Schools	Silver-Gain Schools
Instructional Aides	\$2,000	\$1,500
Teachers	\$4,000	\$3,000
Assistant Principals	\$8,000	\$5,000
Principals	\$12,000	\$8,000

Individual teachers in Gold-Gain schools also are eligible for Spotlight Teacher awards of an additional \$4,000, based on school-level and classroom-level student achievement gains. As a condition of receiving the award, Spotlight Teachers must be willing to document and share their effective practices through NLNS and SchoolWorks.

What are the recent highlights of the program?

The first year of the grant, the 2006–07 school year, was a planning year. During the second year, NLNS launched the EPIC Knowledge System. By the end of the third year, NLNS populated the online sharing system with 25 case studies from NCSC

Spotlight Teachers as well as from other EPIC grants across the country. The case studies detail 84 effective practice profiles from their award-recognized schools in multiple formats, including written case studies and video. NLNS plans to launch a new version of the Knowledge System with additional search features in March 2010.

To date, more than 900 educators from the Gold-Gain and Silver-Gain schools received more than \$3 million in awards. NLNS plans to announce the next cohort of award winners in March 2010 and estimates \$2.3 million in awards for 21 to 24 charter schools. During the next year of the grant, NLNS plans to include charter schools from the following charter school management organizations: Green Dot, Uncommon Schools, and KIPP. For a password to the EPIC Knowledge System, e-mail charterepic@nlns.org.

For more program information, visit the following links:

- *An Evaluation of EPIC's Analysis of School Practice & Knowledge System*
http://www.nlns.org/documents/epic/EPIC_Research_Brief_2009.pdf
- NLNS Epic Details
http://www.nlns.org/epic.jsp#epic_partnershipsnscsc
- NCSC Participating Schools
http://www.nlns.org/documents/epic/EPIC_charter_schools.pdf
- CECR TIF Grantee Profile
<http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/profiles/pdfs/NatChartS.pdf>

Contact Us



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Reform

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The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) was awarded to Westat — in partnership with Learning Point Associates, Synergy Enterprises Inc., Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin — by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2006.

The primary purpose of CECR is to support Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees in their implementation efforts through provision of sustained technical assistance and development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through a newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities.

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